

Southern Wildfire Prevention Learning Exchange Webinar Presenters

David Arnold

David Arnold was appointed State Forester and Assistant Commissioner in 2018. He is responsible for directing the activities of the Division of Forestry in state forest management, wildfire prevention and suppression, reforestation, landowner assistance programs, forest health initiatives, urban forestry programs and forest inventory.

A native of Franklin County, Tennessee, David first joined the agency in 1990 as an area forester in Union County. He went on to gain experience as a forest management chief, forest inventory and analysis coordinator, and forest products marketing coordinator. David was named Assistant State Forester in 2004. In that role, he oversaw as much as \$4 million in federal grants annually, contributed to the development of the division's short- and long-term strategic and tactical plans, and supported budgeting, planning, and hiring within the division. He also supervised the administration of the division's forest health and sustainability unit, as well as the reforestation unit.

David earned a B.S. in Forest Management from Auburn University and a Master of Science in Forestry from the University of Tennessee. He lives in Lebanon with his wife, Cindy, and they have two daughters, Holly and Heather.



Emilie Austin

Emilie Austin is the Communications Coordinator at the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), a non-profit organization composed of the directors of forestry agencies in the 50 states, five U.S. territories, three nations in compacts of free association with the U.S., and the District of Columbia. In addition to the Smokey Bear campaign, her work entails managing NASF's social media presence and developing communications materials for NASF's interests in Congress. She also oversees NASF's national awards programs, including the Wildfire Mitigation Award and Smokey Bear Awards. Emilie received her Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from American University.



Faith Berry

Faith Berry has served as a firefighter, park ranger and assistant park manager working on landscape restoration projects including prescribed fire and selective tree harvesting. She has additionally served as a structure firefighter, fire prevention officer for CAL FIRE, a Fire Safe Council coordinator for the San Diego County Resource Conservation District, a Firewise and Fire-Adapted Community ambassador and then project manager for the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise USA™ Program, and as a Wildfire Community Preparedness Day manager which is NFPA's and State Farm's national grass roots campaign that encourages residents to take steps to improve their wildfire safety. She has written research papers about wildfire safety including one about how youth can be change agents for wildfire safety.

She is currently a Fire Program Specialist at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's U.S. Fire Administration working to support the Wildfire Mitigation and Management Commission, assisting the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate's National Urban Security Technology Laboratory (NUSTL) with testing prototype wildfire respirators, collaborating with the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate on an augmented reality Wildfire Home Safety app, a subject matter expert for the Responder Safety Learning Network's training course for fire service personnel on Wildland Fires and Traffic Management, and has developed content for the US. Fire Administration's WUI webpages including a fillable Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP) template.

Robin Bible

Robin Bible is the Fire Program Specialist for Prevention and Mitigation for the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry. He has been with the Department for 37 years. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee with a B.S. in Forestry in 1979 and obtained a master's degree in Public Administration from Tennessee State University in 1998. He has served as a Fire Prevention Team Leader and Public Information Officer (PIO) with several Fire Prevention Education Teams and currently is a PIO on the Southern Area Gold Team. He enjoys running, hiking and photography in his spare time.



Maureen Brooks

Maureen Brooks is the Branch Chief for Wildfire Prevention and Community Mitigation on the USDA Forest Service Fire and Aviation Staff in the Washington Office. She joined the Washington Office staff as the National Wildfire Prevention Program Manager in 2018 after serving as a Cooperative Fire Specialist on the Fire and Aviation Staff for the Northeastern Area of the US Forest Service State, Private and Tribal Forestry from 2005-2018.

Prior to joining the USDA Forest Service in 2005, Maureen worked for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service. In her nearly 20 years of service there, she worked as a Forest Ranger, Education and Fire Prevention Specialist, and Fire Training and Prevention Officer.

She holds an Associate in Arts degree in Forest Technology from Allegany College of Maryland and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Towson University.



E.J. Bunzendahl

Elizabeth Jane (E.J.) Bunzendahl is one of the Southern Area Cooperative Fire Program Managers and is the Wildland Fire Prevention Program Manager for the USFS Southern Region and was previously the Forest Fire Management Officer for the Daniel Boone National Forest.

She has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Natural Resources Management with a minor in Agronomy from the University of Kentucky. While working in the field of natural resources she has worked for; the Girl Scouts of the USA, the Kentucky

State Nature Preserves Commission, the Kentucky Division of Forestry, the Wasatch-Cache National Forest Logan Hotshots, the Daniel Boone National Forest, and the USFS State, Private and Tribal Forestry in the Southern Region.

Zach Ellinger

Zach Ellinger is a fire mitigation and education program manager with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Zach has worked for federal agencies in fire management since 1999. During his career, he has worked with the public, stakeholders, and partners to promote wildfire outreach and mitigation strategies. During fire season, Zach learns about how different communities prepare for wildfire while serving as a fire prevention education team leader, fire investigator and public information officer. Zach attended the University of Nevada-Reno, focusing on ecological restoration, fire ecology and rangeland habitats.

Cindy Frenzel

Cindy currently serves as a National Team Leader for Fire Prevention Education Teams or as a Public Information Officer at wildfire incidents nationwide.

She has also worked as the Education Coordinator for Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River; the Virginia Project Learning Tree Coordinator and a Fire Prevention Educator for the Virginia Department of Forestry.

Her background also includes work as a park ranger for federal, state and historical parks, including New Market Battlefield. She has an undergraduate degree in Forest Resources Management from Virginia Tech.

With her home pottery studio in Woodstock, Virginia, she is a licensed vendor for the U.S. Forest Service to make Smokey Bear Pottery as Beartree Company. She is also the owner of Ember, a future Fire Education Canine.



Jim Funk

Jim graduated from University of Missouri, Columbia in 1970 with a BS in Forestry. As a forester, he worked with the KY Division of Forestry for 33 years. Forest Synergy was formed in 2004 as a consulting forestry business and now is focused on wildfire prevention. Jim became a Prevention Education Team Member and Leader in 2004 and has been deployed on numerous assignments around the country. He has had the privilege of being on the cadres for several Team Member (P-310) and Team Leader (P-410) NWCG training courses through the years.

Virginia is his current state of residence with wife Cheryl and enjoys golf and making stained glass products. He is a licensed Smokey Bear vendor. Wildfire prevention remains as a passion.



Amanda Kwong

Amanda Kwong (she/her/hers) is a Campaign Director at the Ad Council, a national nonprofit based in New York City. She is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, and evaluation of fully integrated multimedia communications programs on behalf of national non-profit organizations and federal government agencies to drive measurable change on America's most critical social issues. Including the Wildfire Prevention campaign, she also supports campaign efforts related to early detection of Alzheimer's with the Alzheimer's Association, as well as a new campaign with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on helping at-risk individuals for a substance use disorder navigate resources and start their recovery journey. Before Ad Council, she worked agency side on several consumer-packaged goods clients including Unilever. She is currently getting her Master's in Public Health from the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She is a graduate from Syracuse University. Go Orange!



Angie Lane

Angie Lane has held her current position as Assistant Division Manager for the DNR Wildfire Division for the last four years. She has a Bachelor's of Science from Eastern Oregon University in Multi-disciplinary Studies, and a Graduate Certificate from Oregon State University in Sustainable Natural Resources. Angie has worked in the fire protection arena for nearly 30 years. Prior to working for DNR, Angie worked for Oregon Office of Emergency Management as Oregon's State Hazard Mitigation Officer. Angie has also worked for the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) as a National Fire Plan Planning Coordinator where she supported counties and facilitated the process for developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans and garnered grant funding for fuels treatment projects, as well as served as a fire manager (Unit Forester) where she was responsible for fire protection and landowner assistance delivery in 7 counties in eastern Oregon. Angie serves on the NWCG Communication, Education, and Prevention Committee as the National Association of State Foresters Western States representative and is qualified as a Type 1 Public Information Officer, and Type 2 Plans Chief, and is the Plans Chief for NW Team 8 in the Northwest Geographic Area.



Megan Fitzgerald McGowan:

Megan has been working in and around wildfire since 2003 and was a red-carded wildland firefighter and dispatcher. Megan currently works in NFPA's Wildfire Division as the Firewise USA® Program Manager and represents the organization in different wildfire working groups. She connects with federal, state, and local partners to engage residents and communities in proactive wildfire risk reduction activities through the framework of the Firewise USA® Recognition Program. Before joining NFPA in 2017, Megan worked for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, serving as their Firewise liaison for a year and a half. Besides moving Washington's Firewise program forward, she was also active in the state's fire coordination center. Megan holds a master's degree in Natural Resources from the University of Idaho and a certificate in Fire Ecology, Management and Technology. Her transition to the NFPA and supporting Firewise USA has allowed Megan to pursue her goal of using a collaborative approach to help reduce risk and loss from wildfire at the national level.



Evelyn Morgan

Evelyn Morgan is retired US Forest Service, Daniel Boone NF. She is a Graduate of Morehead State University. She started her career with Kentucky State Parks, as a Cave Guide and Recreation Director. Evelyn's career with the Forest Service included conservation education and managing a visitor center, where I infused fire education in my programs. She has actively been involved in prevention for many years.

Sheryl Page

Sheryl Page has been with the USDA Forest Service for over twenty years. She graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in Forestry with a concentration in fire science. She has worked on a timber crew, was a hotshot, fire lookout and prevention technician, with most of her Forest Service career was spent in Cooperative Fire Protection working with various state agencies. She is currently the National Community Wildfire Mitigation Program Manager based out of Colorado.



Tim Phelps

Tim serves as the Communications and Outreach Forester for the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry. In this position Tim is responsible for public and media relations, the general promotion of forestry as a discipline, and the role the Division plays in protecting, conserving, and enhancing the forest resources of Tennessee. Prior to his work in Tennessee, he spent 8 years at Penn State University working as a Research Support Technologist studying hardwood silviculture and tree improvement and served as an instructor of forest dendrology. He is a graduate of Southern Illinois University where he received his Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Forestry. Tim has served as a Public Information Officer on multiple wildfire prevention teams serving federal and state interests, and he also serves annually as a PIO for incident management teams on western wildfires. Tim is also very active with the Society of American Foresters having served in leadership positions at the state and national levels.



Karen Stafford

Karen graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University in 2003 with her Bachelor of Science Degree in Forest Management, and then graduated in 2011 with her Masters of Science in Fire Management. She has worked for Texas A&M Forest Service for 23 years and has been a part of the Mitigation and Prevention Department for the past 18 years. She is currently the statewide Fire Prevention Coordinator and is also a member of the International Society of Arboriculture and holds a Certified Arborist designation.



Mark Thibideau

Mark earned his bachelor's degree in the social science of recreation with an emphasis in outdoor leadership from Indiana University in 2004. While in college, he began working seasonally with the Forest Service as a wilderness trail crewmember on the Hoosier National Forest. After three seasons, he received a one-year term position where I worked on road gates, marked timber, and started my career as a fire engine operator on a type 6 engine in 2005. Mark became a helicopter crewmember and was mobilized on Indiana State type 2 hand crews. With the split spring and fall fire seasons in Indiana, he detailed to California in the summers. He detailed as an engine crewmember, a lead crewmember, dozer tender, and finally a prevention technician before applying and receiving a

prevention technician position in 2008 on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. He has been in this position ever since.

Mark has been involved with fire prevention education teams since 2010 and have served as a team member and leader in at least seven different states. He has been involved with prevention campaign management and public outreach material development for Shoot Responsibly, Spark Safety Not Wildfire, One Less Spark One Less Wildfire, Campfire Pin Flag Program, and Recreate Responsibly point of sales marketing. I have participated in two mass media campaigns, Recreate Responsibly and Smokey Bears 75th birthday, with the Ad Council and Washington D.C. Office of the Forest Service. He assisted in the rewrite of the P-310 Prevention Education Team Member NWCG course and is part of the cadre helping to teach Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment and Planning Strategies WPSAPS in California. He has been the lead cadre member for P-101, FI-110, P-301, P-310, and P-410. He is currently serving as the chairperson for the National Fire Prevention Education Team Subcommittee under NWCG.

In my off time in the summer, Mark enjoys mountain biking and motorcycle riding. In the winter, he is the hockey director and coach for the Mount Shasta Icebreakers a non-profit amateur ice hockey organization at my local rink in Mount Shasta, California.”



Fred Turck

Fred X. Turck has 43 years of professional experience with the Virginia Department of Forestry, retiring in June 2022. For the last 20 years he was a member of the DOF HQ Fire and Emergency Response Branch. Program areas include Wildfire Prevention and Education, Prescribed Fire and Wildland Urban Interface/Firewise coordination. Prior to retirement he was carded as a Type 1 PIO, PETM and PETL nationally and an ITC-3 and Plans Section Chief at the state level.

A graduate of Syracuse University/NY State Ranger School and Virginia Tech. Fred has served on several committees, including the National Wildfire Coordinating Groups Communication, Education and Prevention Committee. Fred is only the 3rd person to have been nationally recognized with Bronze, Silver and Gold Smokey Bear Award, and the only person to have received a second Gold Smokey Award. The second was as part of the Mid-Atlantic Forest Fire Compact. In addition, he has been honored to receive the VA Governors Fire Service Award for Fire Prevention, the Southern Regions Browning award and the Northeast McNamara Award, and most recently the Rising Star Award from the VA Fire and Life Safety Coalition. He has published several articles in various magazines and other publications. Fred is nationally recognized for his work with firewise and wildfire prevention and has helped established Virginia as a leader in this area. He is currently contracting with the Wildland learning Portal and the USFS to help design, develop and coordinate various training courses.



Diego Villegas

Diego Villegas is an Assistant Campaign Manager at the Ad Council, an advertising nonprofit based in New York City. He is responsible for assisting with the implementation of fully integrated multimedia PSA campaigns and activations on behalf of various organizations. In addition to the Wildfire Prevention campaign, he also works on Adoption from Foster Care, a campaign centered around the need for teens in foster care to find forever families and Transforming Hiring and Diversifying Talent. A campaign focused on changing perceptions and driving employers to hire STARS, workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes instead of a bachelor's degree. Diego currently resides in Chicago, Illinois and is a graduate from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign!



Gary Wood

Gary resides in Smithfield, NC and holds an Associate degree in Forest Resources Technology and Management from Wayne Community College. Gary spent 31 years working for the NC Forest Service in various positions across NC. Prior to retirement, Gary served as Wildfire Mitigation Specialist where he worked promoting the Firewise® program, performing community and home risk assessments, and administering a wildfire mitigation grant program to communities. As a member of Fire Staff, he also served as Fire Staff Operations Officer mobilizing resources to wildfires and other emergencies across NC and to

other States. He was a member of incident management teams serving as a qualified Information Officer, Liaison Officer, Safety Officer, and Structural Protection Specialist. Gary retired in 2015 with 31 years of service to the NC Forest Service.

In 2015 Gary was hired by the Southern Group of State Foresters to serve as SE Regional Coordinator for Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Gary serves as Coordinator for the Southeast Regional Strategy Committee for implementation of the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. He is responsible for providing support in the 13 southern States to Local, County, State, Tribal, Federal, NGO partners and stakeholders in implementing the 153 item SE Regional Action Plan which outlines tasks for implementation of the Cohesive Strategy. The Southeast Regional Strategy Committee represents the Southeast Region for the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC). Gary has served as a volunteer fireman for 25+ years and is a NC Fire & Rescue Commission Certified Level II Firefighter. He serves as a Chaplain, Board of Director Member and as Treasurer of the Firefighters Relief Fund for Pine Level Fire Department.

In his spare time, Gary enjoys duck hunting and saltwater fishing.

